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What's Improved Thanks to Texas' Open Electricity Market?

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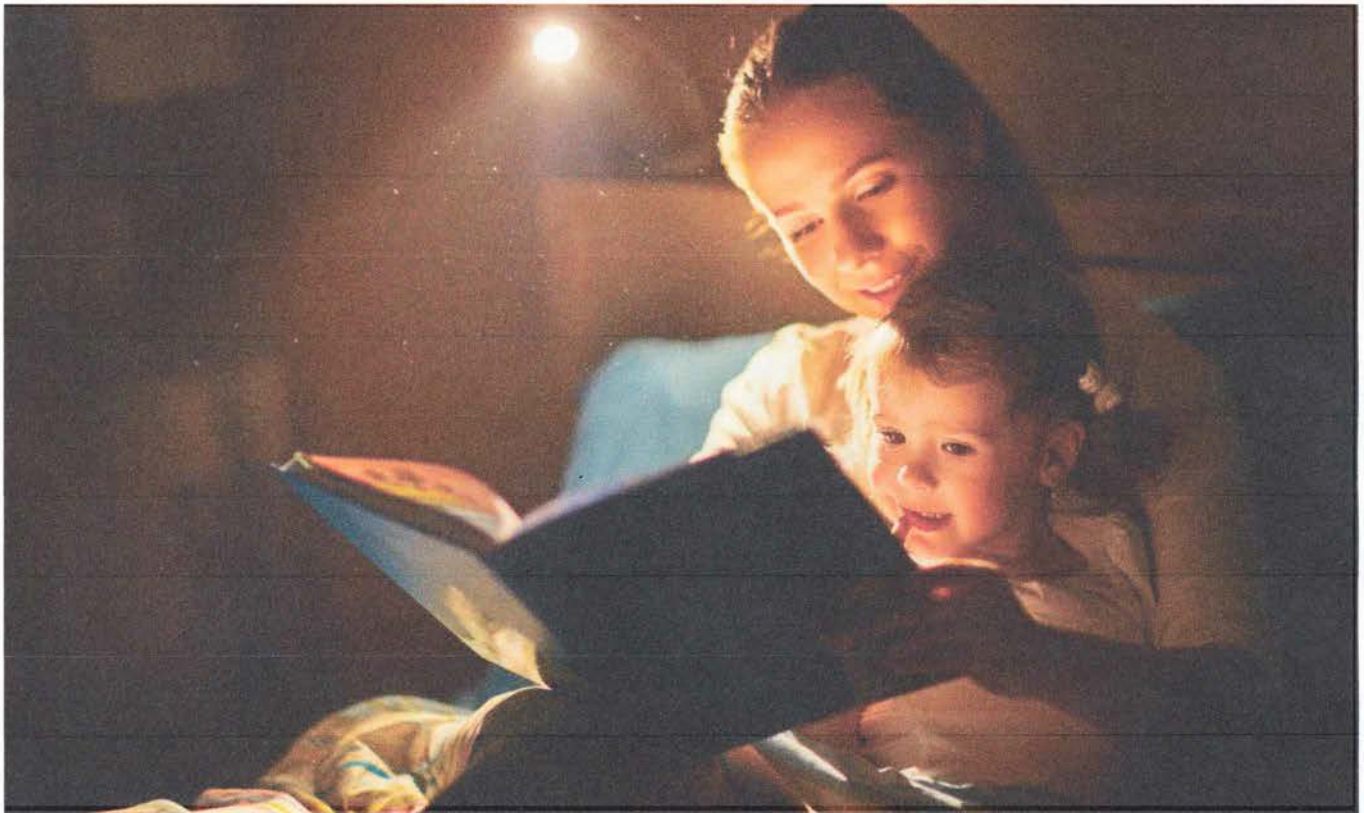
Direct Energy

BY [TM PROMOTIONS](#)

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I **magine 20 years ago in Texas**, a young couple moves into their new home. One of the first things they need is an electricity provider. Instead of researching their options and finding the best package for their lifestyle, they realize they only have ONE choice – a monopoly electric utility that provides electricity to everyone in the same way at the same cost.

Things changed for the better in 2002, after the Texas legislature opened the state's electricity market to competition in most regions of Texas. Since then, competitive market pressures continue to drive retail electricity providers to focus on improving their customer services, customer insight tools and innovative new products and solutions to stay ahead of the competition. Today, many different retail electricity providers offer a range of plans that give you power the way you want it. Literally.



Jim Steffes, Executive Vice President of Corporate & Regulatory Affairs for Direct Energy

For an overview of what happened after the market opened, and to better

the state's large cities with customers.

Perhaps you have seen the big wind turbines on ranches and farms, and in solar you will see more panels on large tracts of land. But there are also more distributed renewable assets now, like solar panels on rooftops and the use of micro generators for more reliability.

By offering plans that are sourced by renewables, companies like Direct Energy are letting consumers drive the continuation of these innovations by expressing their preference for a more sustainable offer.

TM: The free market for electricity is great, but it means a customer can change providers at any time. What does Direct Energy do to earn and keep its customer's trust and business?

STEFFES: The company encourages people to be active consumers, so products and services that win customers' business are constantly reviewed and improved. Every so often, review your plan and go see what else is out there. We know if you find something better, you can switch providers. But we think the energy business is just like other services – your cell phone, cable, car insurance. You want to build up a partnership with a company you know has your back.

Direct Energy helps customers better understand how their day-to-day decisions impact energy usage and bills. By giving customers the insights and knowledge, they need to make smart decisions about their energy usage, customers will remain with us over the years as the company continues to help them on their energy journey.

At Direct Energy, we're here to answer your questions. If you want to learn more about how to shop for electricity, or have a question about your current energy plan, give us a call. We have a team of experts available to speak with you. One reason we maintain a healthy social media presence, is to engage in conversations, with our customers and receive feedback. That's crucial in a competitive market like Texas. Direct Energy works every day to be *the* company to find a solution for you.

TM: What role has the Texas Legislature and the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) played in making the Texas electricity market as vibrant and healthy as it is?

STEFFES: It's the policymakers and regulators who gave this market a solid framework that is resolutely pro-consumer. Leaders remained focused on creating competition that still provides certainty and reliability for Texans.

Our legislature in Austin deserves the credit for helping new technologies enter the market. By creating such a vibrant, nimble, competitive playing field, they've positioned electric providers to do more research and product development to attract customers. To think of competitive markets another way, providers can only sell what consumers want to buy instead of force-fitting one solution onto everyone at a single, inefficient price.

The PUCT followed in the policymakers' footsteps in terms of being pro-consumer.

They conducted studies and proceedings on electric service and treating consumers fairly and efficiently, and then implemented a statewide Customer Education Campaign so that Texans would know their rights, options and how to use shopping sites for an electricity provider. This enabled Texans to find a plan best suited for their needs. And, the PUCT is always there monitoring the market so that consumers can shop with confidence.

The Direct Energy team believes educated and informed shoppers win. The PUCT ensures that companies live up to their promises, so families can feel confident in shopping for an electricity provider.

For more information on the Texas electricity market, go to the PUC website or DirectEnergy.com.

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